

# Short inspection of Cambridgeshire County Council

Inspection dates:

23 and 24 March 2022

## **Outcome**

Cambridgeshire County Council continues to be a good provider.

## **Information about this provider**

Cambridgeshire County Council (Cambridgeshire Skills) is a local authority provider which offers education and training for adults, including community learning.

At the time of the inspection, there were more than 1,300 learners enrolled. Over 700 learners study English and mathematics qualifications. Cambridgeshire Skills operate from three main sites based in Fenlands, East Cambridgeshire and Cambridge city.

Cambridgeshire Skills' intention is to empower the most vulnerable residents to progress on to further study, employment and volunteering and enhance their career opportunities. Cambridgeshire Skills currently works with 11 sub-contractors to provide education and training to residents.

## **What is it like to be a learner with this provider?**

Learners continue to enjoy a positive learning experience. They develop purposeful relationships with fellow learners while studying. This helps them to improve their interpersonal and social skills and consider what potential opportunities may be available to them. Learners develop the skills they need to access the labour market and participate in society.

Learners value the flexibility that their courses offer. This enables them to study at a variety of locations and timings to suit them, for example on Saturdays when they are not in work or during school hours when they are not undertaking their caring responsibilities. This helps them to manage their own professional development very effectively.

Learners gain significant benefits from their courses. Those studying English for speakers of other languages, who previously felt isolated, now are confident to take an active part in community projects. For example, volunteering at their children's

schools and collecting nappies, medicine and other provisions to help Ukrainian refugees.

Learners are highly motivated to succeed. They develop their ability to reflect accurately on the standard of their work, making good use of the helpful and constructive feedback they receive from their tutors. Learners understand how to improve their work and can evaluate their progress correctly over time.

Learners feel safe. They use what they are taught in their courses in their day-to-day lives to ensure that they remain safe. For example, learners know how to stay safe when travelling on public transport or parking their car late at night.

### **What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders and managers continue to implement an effective curriculum that meets the needs of the different communities they serve countywide. Learners gain the good skills they need to meet the regional and national skills demand.

Leaders work effectively with a broad range of employers, local agencies and interested parties. For example, they work with employers who operate in the agriculture sector by arranging English sessions onsite during migrant workers' shifts. Furthermore, tutors teach literacy and IT to help learners of the traveller communities to access vocational courses such as heavy goods vehicle driving courses. This helps them to gain employment that is in demand locally. This also helps traveller communities to integrate with residents and employers.

Leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the quality of education effectively. They accurately identify teaching strategies that tutors need to improve. Leaders then provide relevant professional development sessions that enable teachers to improve their practice. Tutors value this approach to their continued professional development and feel that their workload is appropriately managed.

Learners are well prepared for their end of course examinations. Tutors plan lessons carefully to ensure that learners revisit key learning concepts. This helps learners to deepen their knowledge and understanding and apply it effectively to a range of contexts.

Tutors use assessment very effectively in order to enable learners to make rapid progress. Tutors skilful use of feedback enables learners to know what they have done well and what they need to further improve on. In English, tutors carefully correct learners' pronunciation and intonation, enabling them to improve their communication. This enables learners to grow in confidence and enhance their vocabulary.

Governors provide good support and challenge to senior leaders. Governors have the appropriate experience and expertise to hold senior leaders to account and have an effective oversight, so that leaders know what they do well and what they

need to further improve on. Governors are active in their monitoring of the quality of education and training. For example, they frequently visit lessons to gain feedback from learners and experience what it is like to study at Cambridgeshire Skills.

Too few learners benefit from effective ongoing careers advice and guidance to inform their next steps. As a result, learners are not always aware of what their options are to help them achieve their personal and professional goals. Leaders recognise there is more to do, particularly with their subcontractor partners, to implement the careers strategy leaders committed to in 2020.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff take a proactive approach to deal with any safeguarding incidents. For example, staff work with various partners to deal with issues such as domestic abuse suffered by learners. As a result, learners are confident that staff will listen and provide support when they report any concerns.

Tutors receive effective and ongoing safeguarding training to support them in ensuring that they follow safe working practices. Tutors effectively carry out appropriate risk assessments when required to make sure that learners are kept safe.

## **What does the provider need to do to improve?**

- Leaders and managers need to ensure that learners, including those with their subcontractor partners, receive effective ongoing and impartial career advice and guidance to help them make informed choices about the options available to them and their potential next steps.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	50971
<b>Address</b>	34 Station Road March Cambridgeshire PE15 8LE
<b>Contact number</b>	01353 613013
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.cambsals.co.uk">www.cambsals.co.uk</a>
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Pat Carrington (Executive Principal)
<b>Provider type</b>	Local authority
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	26 and 27 May 2016
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	Bottisham Village College Cambridge English Language Society Comberton Village College Groundwork East Longhurst Group Limited Romsey Mill Social Echo CIC Switch Now CIC SPS Training United Learning Trust Workers Educational Association

## Information about this inspection

The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since Cambridgeshire County Council was judged to be good in May 2016.

The inspection team was assisted by the head of service, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

### Inspection team

Sambit Sen, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Philip Elliott	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Griffin	Ofsted Inspector
Rosy Belton	Ofsted Inspector

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